

Abdenmour Benantar*

Algeria's Security Policy

Transformations and Dilemmas in the Context of Regional Unrest and Internal *Hirāk***

سياسة الجزائر الأمنية

تحولات ومعضلات في سياق القلاقل إقليمياً والحراك داخلياً

Abstract: This study examines Algeria's security policy generally and its security doctrine specifically, analysing its transformations and dilemmas in a turbulent regional environment and in the *hirāk* context internally. It argues that both policy and doctrine have undergone minor adjustments as an adaptation to regional security imperatives, ruling out any essential transformation at present. Further, it argues that tensions between ethical-normative and security imperatives on one hand, and the principles of non-interference and non-intervention on the other, represent two essential quandaries facing Algeria's security policy. It is on the basis of these two elements that this study examines Algeria's security policy, doctrine, and the transformations therein. Next, it takes pause at the decision to constitutionalise the participation of Algerian armed forces in international peacekeeping operations, examining its contexts (locally and abroad), motivations, justifications, and challenges. Regionally, it analyses Algeria's security strategy as an alternative to intervention, reaching three essential conclusions: first, a limited adaptation to the issue of foreign intervention has occurred; second, Algeria's absolute refusal to deploy troops beyond its borders has come to an end; and third, heightened tension between ethical-normative and security considerations in the event of continued unrest in its neighbourhood is likely.

Keywords: Security Policy, Algeria, Regional Security, Army Participation in Peacekeeping, Border Security.

الملخص: تتناول هذه الدراسة سياسة الجزائر الأمنية عموماً وعقيدتها الأمنية خصوصاً، محللةً تحولاتها ومعضلاتها في بيئة إقليمية مضطربة وفي سياق حراك شعبي داخلياً. وتحتاج بأن ثمة تعديلات طفيفة طرأت عليهما تكييفاً مع مقتضيات أمنية إقليمية، مستبعدة أي تغير جوهري في الراهن. كما تحتاج بأن التوتر بين المقتضيات الأخلاقية/ المعيارية والأمنية من جهة، ومبدأ عدم التدخل المزدوج (السياسي والعسكري) من جهة أخرى يمثلان معضلتين أساسيتين تواجههما سياسة الجزائر الأمنية وعقيدتها. وعلى أساس هذين العنصرين تبحث الدراسة في سياسة الجزائر وعقيدتها وتحولاتها. ثم تتوقف عند قرار دسترة مشاركة القوات الجزائرية في عمليات حفظ السلام الدولية محللة سياقيته (المحلي والخارجي) ودوافعه ومسوغاته، والمحاذير المترتبة عليه. وتحلل استراتيجية الجزائر الأمنية إقليمياً، والتي تطرحها بديلاً للتدخل. وتوصلت الدراسة إلى ثلاث استنتاجات أساسية. أولاً، ثمة تكييف محدود مع مسألة التدخل الخارجي وفقاً لمقتضيات المصلحة الأمنية. ثانياً، نهاية الرفض المطلق لنشر القوات خارج الحدود. ثالثاً، ترجيح احتدام التوتر بين الاعتبارات الأخلاقية/ المعيارية والأمنية في حال استمرار الاضطرابات في تخومها.

كلمات مفتاحية: السياسة الأمنية، الجزائر، الأمن الإقليمي، مشاركة الجيش في عمليات السلام، أمن الحدود.

* Associate Professor, Université Paris 8, Paris, France.

Email: abenantar@univ-paris8.fr

** This study was originally published in Arabic in: Abdenmour Benantar, "Algeria's Security Policy: Transformations and Dilemmas in the Context of Regional Unrest and Internal *Hirāk*," *Siyasat Arabiya*, no. 55 (March 2022), pp. 19-43, and was translated by Nick Lobo. *Siyasat Arabiya* is a bimonthly peer-reviewed political science and international relations journal.

Introduction

The Maghrebi-Saheli region faces instability due to the delinquency of the state, the proliferation of non-state threats (e.g., terrorism, organised crime, weapons proliferation, etc.), conflicts, civil wars, and foreign interventions.¹ Those jeopardise Algeria's security and put its security doctrine to the test, particularly in relation to intervention and sovereignty.² Its doctrine is fraught with tension as never before between ethical-normative imperatives and security needs. From these structural and incidental developments and the tensions that have confounded Algerian security policy in general emerges the question as to whether the last stronghold against intervention in the region will collapse due to regional unrest and international pressures, especially after the constitution was amended to permit the army to take part in peacekeeping operations.

This study examines the transformations of Algerian security policy and doctrine in a turbulent regional context and amid internal popular *hirāk*, focusing on the security doctrine by investigating its foundations, principles, transformations, and dilemmas. To that end, the study seeks to answer several questions. What are the foundations of Algerian security policy/doctrine and their dilemmas? Could the outgrowth of instability and intervention/interference by foreign actors, in addition to the internal context, drive Algeria to review its security doctrine? How might such a review manifest itself, and to what extent? To answer these questions, I begin with two premises, the first of which states that there is an “old” significance (i.e., attitude toward the Mali crisis) and a modern significance (i.e., the constitutionalising of the army's participation in peacekeeping operations) which confirm that a transformation is taking place in the country's security doctrine, and that it is one of adjustment, not of substantial change. The second premise is that structural revision of its doctrine, or at least of some of its basic principles, is unlikely given the absence of a state-level threat, an extensive conflict placing Algeria's national security (i.e., the violation of its territorial sovereignty) in serious jeopardy, a transformation in its ruling regime, or at the minimum radical change in its political orientations.

I will analyse each of these issues through four topics of discussion. The first of these is dedicated to investigating Algeria's security policy, and especially its doctrine, by returning to its historical context and examining its foundations and principles after taking a conceptual approach to security policy. Meanwhile, the second topic is set aside for the analysis and discussion of some of the dilemmas by noting the discrepancy between ethical-normative and security imperatives on one hand, and non-interference in the internal affairs of states and non-military intervention on the other, before concluding with an analysis of the adjustment in Algeria's security doctrine. The third topic examines the significance and consequences of constitutionalising the Algerian Army's participation in peacekeeping operations, whereas the fourth and final topic is devoted to the analysis of Algeria's regional security strategy as an alternative to intervention, with a vision of regionalising its national security.

On Algeria's Security Policy and Doctrine

Conceptual Framework

National security is defined as

an official description of how a state aims to provide for its own security and that of its population: it establishes a national understanding of the threats and risks of the security environment and the values and principles that will guide the state in providing state and human security.

¹ Clionadh Raleigh, Héli Nsaibia & Caitriona Dowd, “The Sahel Crisis Since 2012,” *African Affairs*, vol. 120, no. 478 (January 2021), pp. 123-143; Luis Martinez, *L'Afrique du Nord après les révoltes arabes* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2019); Abdennour Benantar, *Les initiatives de sécurité au Maghreb et au Sahel: le G5 Sahel mis à l'épreuve* (Paris: Fondation pour la recherche stratégique L'Harmattan, 2019).

² On intervention and sovereignty, see: Cynthia Weber, *Simulating Sovereignty: Intervention, the State and Symbolic Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); R. J. Vincent, *Nonintervention and International Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

National security is also “intended to provide an overarching national vision as the basis for the development of other documents such as a national security strategy”.³ Security policy, which is of a comprehensive nature in that it encompasses both internal and external elements and the various sectors of security, consists of identifying various dangers and threats, their nature and development, and what may result from their concurrence or interaction, as well as determining the strategies to be employed and the means to implement them. The ultimate goal of security policy is twofold: the survival of the state and its inhabitants, and their welfare in a broad sense.⁴

Although they are sometimes used interchangeably, national security policy differs from national security strategy. While the former “is a general description that sets priorities and goals for security provision”, the latter describes “how the goals set in a national security policy can be achieved” and consists of a document or set of documents that characterise “the necessary instruments to implement a national security policy, how these instruments should be employed over a long period of time and how they should be used together in order to avoid duplication and makes the best use of resources. In sum, a national security strategy describes how to implement a national security policy”.⁵ Implementing a security policy generally necessitates determining a set of threats, adversaries, and even enemies, as well as setting goals and allocating resources to achieve those goals. On this subject, Samuel Huntington argues that national security strategy “is conducted against an opponent... [it] implies an opponent, a conflict, a competition, a situation where an individual or a group is trying to achieve a goal against somebody else”.⁶

Military doctrine, on the other hand, is defined by NATO as the “fundamental principles by which military forces guide their actions in support of objectives” and as “authoritative but requires judgement in application”.⁷ Meanwhile, according to Emily Goldman, national security doctrine refers

*to the instrumental goals through which national security interests are protected [...] and to the means (military, diplomatic, economic, domestic mobilization themes, etc.) employed to serve those instrumental goals.*⁸

Thus, the concept of security doctrine is better suited to our topic than military doctrine for three reasons. Whereas military doctrine focuses on the combat side, forming units and directives for the army, security policy comprises more than defence, and thus the expression “security strategy”, most famously the US National Security Strategy, is more common than “defence strategy”. France, which issued a document called “White Paper on Defence”, later retitled its strategy the “White Paper on Defence and National Security”. Security policy is based on the concept of security⁹ in its broadest sense, so it includes both internal and external dimensions, coercive and non-coercive, due to the presence of a cooperative dimension (i.e., security through cooperation). Security doctrine is more comprehensive, hence, than military doctrine.

The Formation of Algeria’s Security Policy and Doctrine

Algeria’s security policy overall, and especially its national security doctrine, took shape during the War of Liberation and throughout the early years of independence, under the influence of pro-liberation orientations

³ “National Security Policies - Formulating National Security Policies for Good Security Sector Governance,” *DCAF*, p. 1, accessed on 30/7/2022, at: <https://cutt.ly/ICAnzJe>

⁴ Abdennour Benantar, “The State and the Dilemma of Security Policy,” in: Luis Martinez & Rasmus Alenius Boserup (eds.), *Algeria Modern: From Opacity to Complexity* (London: Hurst, 2016), p. 93.

⁵ “National Security Policies,” p. 6.

⁶ Quoted in: Emily O. Goldman, “New Threats, New Identities and New Ways of War: The Sources of Change in National Security Doctrine,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2 (2001), p. 45.

⁷ “AAP-06 Edition 2021 – NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions,” *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, 2021, p. 44, accessed on 18/3/2022, at: <https://cutt.ly/KD9tpoK>

⁸ Goldman, p. 43

⁹ On the concept of security, see: Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991); Thierry Balzacq, *Théories de la sécurité: Les approches critiques* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2016).

(i.e., support for liberation movements) and the border dispute with Morocco, whose territorial claims against Algeria precipitated an invasion of the Algerian territory in October 1963 (i.e., the “Sand War”). The “Sand War” represented a turning point in the formation of Algeria’s security doctrine.¹⁰ Further, Algerian-Moroccan relations¹¹ became a determining factor of the Maghrebi regional system especially after the Western Sahara conflict broke out, in the wake of the conclusion of the November 1975 tripartite agreement between Spain, Morocco, and Mauritania whereby the countries would share the territory as soon as Spain withdrew.

This agreement—brokered without any consultation with Algeria, which led it to back the Polisario Front (established by Sahrawis in the early 1970s)—represented a strategic development for Algeria, as it occurred within a vital security zone¹² designated by Houari Boumédiène, who asserted that “the Arab Maghreb and the region between Cairo and Dakar represent a security zone for Algeria, and no changes may occur in this region without an agreement with Algeria”.¹³ The events of 2021 (i.e., Morocco’s surveillance of Algerian public figures’ cell phones, then Algeria’s severing of diplomatic ties and closure of its airspace to Morocco) indicate that strained relations with Morocco remain a foundational element of Algerian security doctrine. Yet these tensions do not change the nature of the Maghrebi strategic landscape in that it does not face any existential threats.

Thus, Algeria’s security doctrine is the product of the revolutionary imaginary toward the anticolonial struggle, the war for liberation, and the first two decades of post-independence state-building; premature tension with Morocco, then competition and adopting a position in support of liberation movements as well as state sovereignty;¹⁴ furthermore the crisis of the 1990s. The war of liberation and the domestic crisis of the 1990s, what Jutta Weldes has called a **security imaginary**, defined as “a structure of well-established meanings and social relations out of which representations of the world of international relations are created”.¹⁵ Weldes argues that

*the security imaginary makes possible representations that clarify both for state officials themselves and for the others who and what “we” are, who and what “our enemies” are, in what ways we are threatened by them, and how we might best deal with those threats.*¹⁶

Foundations of Algeria’s Security Policy and Doctrine

Algeria’s political and security doctrine is based on several guidelines that have transformed into fixed principles: international legitimacy; non-interference in the internal affairs of states and non-intervention on part of foreign military powers, including its own army (except the wars of 1967 and 1973); rejection of the military option; the peaceful settlement of conflicts; not threatening to use or resort to force; supporting liberation movements; joining various international arms control and disarmament mechanisms; the right of each state to its own undiminished security; and security independence, separate and apart from any external umbrella or foreign presence in its territory.¹⁷ In addition to counterterrorism, which has all but become an established security doctrine in and of itself, albeit falling under the security doctrine of the state.

¹⁰ Abdennour Benantar, *al-Bu’d al-Mutawassif lil-Amn al-Jazā’irī: al-Jazā’ir, ‘Urūbba, wa-l-Hilf al-Aṭlasī* (Algiers: Contemporary Library, 2005), pp. 41-42.

¹¹ On Algerian-Moroccan relations, see: Walid Abdulhay, “al-‘Ilāqāt al-Maghribiyya – al-Jazā’iriyya: al-‘Uqda al-Jiyūstrāṭījiyya,” *Siyasat Arabiyya*, no. 6 (January 2014), pp. 31-40.

¹² Benantar, *Al-Bu’d al-Mutawassif lil-Amn al-Jazā’irī*, pp. 42-43.

¹³ Statement from Boumédiène, quoted in: Abdelbaki Hermassi, *al-Mujtama’ wa-l-Dawla fi al-Maghrib al-‘Arabī* (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 1987), pp. 183-136.

¹⁴ Benantar, *Al-Bu’d al-Mutawassif lil-Amn al-Jazā’irī*, pp. 41-42.

¹⁵ Jutta Weldes, *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁷ Benantar, “The State and the Dilemma of Security Policy,” pp. 98-102.

According to these principles, Algeria adopted a military doctrine¹⁸ by which it has chosen a defensive posture for its army.¹⁹ In this respect, it closely resembles Egypt²⁰ and especially South Africa with its strategy of “non-offensive defence”.²¹ With the army’s participation in peacekeeping operations having been constitutionalised, Algeria upholds the other tenet on which South African security policy is based: Africa-focused peacekeeping.²² Because intervention outside of Algerian territory is entirely ruled out, the army’s role abroad is limited to observation assignments as part of UN peacekeeping operations.²³ Hence, Algerian security policy is essentially defensive and delineated by principles which do not allow it to undermine the interests of other states.

Since its independence, Algeria has embraced a model of security independence from any external umbrella (e.g., strategic alliances, defence treaties, military bases) while developing a self-sufficient national defence system, preferring a realist approach that relies on its own capabilities to build a defence system to stave off aggression, not to attack others or intervene in their affairs.²⁴ As such, Algeria’s conception is based in particular on the need to make its own decisions on measures to guarantee its security, excluding any dependence on the outside regardless of its nature and degree, to which we may apply Barry Buzan’s analysis according to which the concept of national security requires a self-help approach. Buzan argues that “the measures which provide security are largely, if not wholly, under the control of the state concerned”.²⁵

Given the nature of its war for liberation, Algeria took up a security doctrine independent of any alliance or foreign presence in its territory, and it remained committed to this principle which has become a constant strategic option.²⁶ Hence, the war of liberation shaped the political and normative dimensions of Algeria’s behaviour, marked by a refusal to use force in international relations and an aversion to military alliances and the global system based on power balances.²⁷

According to this anti-alliance perception, in April 1972 Algeria proposed the arrangement of a conference on security in the Mediterranean outside of NATO and the Warsaw Pact under the theme of “the Mediterranean belongs to Mediterraneans”. Contrary to the other Arab states, Algeria concluded no defence treaties or agreements with foreign powers. Further, it has refused and continues to refuse granting external powers military facilities or allowing the presence of those powers’ military bases on its territory. Between 1967 and 1968, it pushed France to withdraw its forces from its land prior to the agreed-upon date.²⁸ In October 1971, Algerian President Houari Boumédiène declared that “now, our country is fully independent. We have rid ourselves of foreign bases without fanfare, assemblies, or popular demonstrations”.²⁹

It would later come to light that this statement was not merely a celebration of the “manner” by which foreign forces were expelled from Algerian soil, but the establishment of a security doctrine in this field

¹⁸ On Algerian military doctrine, see: Mansour Lakhdari, *al-Siyāsa al-Amniyya al-Jazā’iriyya: al-Muḥaddidāt, al-Mayādīn, al-Taḥaddiyāt* (Doha: ACRPS, 2015), pp. 121-128.

¹⁹ Benantar, “The State and the Dilemma of Security Policy,” pp. 100-102.

²⁰ Esraa Ahmed Ismail, *al-‘Ilāqāt al-Madaniyya al-‘Askariyya wa-‘Amaliyyat al-Taḥawwul al-Dīmuqrāṭī: Dirāsa Muqārīna bayn Miṣr wa-l-Jazā’ir* (Cairo: al-Maktab al-Arabi Lil-Maariif, 2017), pp. 109-111.

²¹ Evert Jordaan & Abdel Esterhuise, “South African Defence since 1994: The Influence of Non-offensive Defence,” *African Security Review*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2004), pp. 59-69.

²² Moda Dieng, “Maintien de la paix: apports et limites de l’action diplomatique sud-africaine,” *Revue Etudes internationales*, vol. 45, no. 2 (Juin 2004), p. 209.

²³ Algerian military observers participated in several UN Missions (Angola, Haiti, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan). See: “Troop and Police Contributors,” *United Nations Peacekeeping*, accessed on 20/3/2022, at: <https://bit.ly/3tluYal>

²⁴ Benantar, *Al-Bu‘d al-Mutawassīfī lil-Amn al-Jazā’irī*, pp. 41, 89.

²⁵ Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983), p. 218.

²⁶ Benantar, *Al-Bu‘d al-Mutawassīfī lil-Amn al-Jazā’irī*, pp. 41, 89.

²⁷ Louisa Dris-Ait Hamadouche, “Politique extérieure et politique intérieure algérienne: la résistance révolutionnaire au service de la résilience autoritaire?” *Maghreb-Machrek*, no. 221 (2014), pp. 12-13.

²⁸ Benantar, *Al-Bu‘d al-Mutawassīfī lil-Amn al-Jazā’irī*, pp. 41, 51, 66.

²⁹ Houari Boumédiène, *Discours: du sang à la sueur* (Algèr: Ministère de l’information et de la Culture, 1975), p. 147.

which would remain constant even throughout the Cold War. Between 1967 and 1969, the Soviet Union exerted pressure on Algeria to offer its facilities to the Fifth Eskadra, but Algeria refused, despite its reliance on the Soviets to build its nascent naval forces.³⁰

In 2013, Algeria reaffirmed its wholly rejectionist stance toward the establishment of external bases on its territory, refusing Russia's request for naval facilities. Russia had already offered Algeria an agreement comprising military privileges in exchange for naval facilities prior to reiterating its request for access to facilities after cutting ties with Muammar al-Gadhafi due to the wars in Libya and Syria. Algeria justified its decision under the pretexts of national sovereignty and good neighbourliness, stressing that it would not get involved in any threats to its neighbours in the West Mediterranean and the United States (whose forces were being deployed to Spain and Italy).³¹ What becomes clear from all this is that Algeria's rejection of foreign alliances and external presence is a strategic option underpinning its security doctrine: it relies on its own capabilities and abilities to guarantee its security while entirely ruling out any military options abroad, preferring to carry out a set of alternatives as we shall see.

The Principle of Non-Interference/Non-Intervention

Non-interference and non-intervention are considered established principles in Algeria's foreign and security policies, and thus in its security doctrine. Non-interference is the most constitutionalised principle, having been included in the 1976 constitution. Beginning with the 1989 constitution, the same article has been repeated verbatim in every subsequent constitution:

algeria shall work for the reinforcement of international cooperation and for the development of amicable relations between the states on the basis of equality, mutual interest, and non-interference in internal affairs. It adopts the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations.

Military intervention, too, is discouraged; the constitution (art. 31) stipulates Algeria's forbearance from "resorting to war, and [also its] exertion of efforts to settle disputes peacefully". It further stipulates that the duty of the army is limited to protecting the country and its borders, but it does not expressly prohibit it from intervening abroad. While Algeria's security doctrine differs from that of most Arab states, it greatly resembles to that of Indian (including regional security doctrine)³² and Chinese, despite the massive disparity in power.

The principle of foreign non-interference and military non-intervention is considered the essence of Algeria's security doctrine and a benchmark for its behaviour: it is in the name of this principle that Algeria rejected intervention in Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Mali, despite a degree of adaptation to the latter case, as we shall see. Further, Algeria refused to join the Islamic Military Counterterrorism Coalition (a Saudi-led bloc of 34 states) and to get involved in sectarian conflicts around the Sunni-Shi'i "divide" politically instrumentalised in the Arab Middle East. Regionally, Algeria's relations with intervention-inclined Arab actors, whether directly or via third parties, have seen some tension, and under this principle it is highly unlikely that Algeria will join the G5 Sahel.³³ Algeria's conception of the non-interference/non-intervention principle relies on three approaches, in that it is guided by the considerations of liberalism (international rules and institutions), constructivism (e.g., norms and identity), and realism (e.g., sovereignty, state-centrism, self-interest).

³⁰ Walter Laqueur, "The Soviet Union and the Maghreb," in: Alvin J. Cottrell & James D. Theberge (eds.), *The Western Mediterranean: Its Political, Economic and Strategic Importance* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 221.

³¹ *El-Khabar*, 16/4/2013.

³² Devin T. Hagerty, "India's Regional Security Doctrine," *Asian Survey*, vol. 31, no. 4 (April 1991), pp. 351-252.

³³ Benantar, "'Aqīdat al-Jazā'ir al-Amniyya: Ḍughūtāt al-Bī'a wa-Muqtaḍayāt al-Mašāliḥ,'" *Aljazeera Centre for Studies*, 2/5/2018, p. 3, accessed on 16/3/2020, at: <https://cutt.ly/4D7kTtK>

Algeria's conception of interference is pragmatic and based on reciprocity, such that its restraint serves also to protect the Algerian regime from intervention. In July 2017, then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdelkader Messahel declared that "when we decline to interfere in the affairs of others, we reject the interference of others in our own affairs. It has been a principle from independence to the present day".³⁴ This is the same logic to which an official spokesman for the government alluded in November 2019, at the height of the *hirāk*: "Algeria is committed to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, just as it does not accept interference in its internal affairs".³⁵ It must be recalled that interference in Algeria's internal affairs was a real preoccupation of the authorities during the internal crisis of the 1990s.³⁶ Hence, the rejection of interference in the internal affairs of the Sahel states also serves Algeria's interests: namely, in refusing interference in its own internal affairs amid critical circumstances, such as the sectarian confrontations in Ghardaia, or security disturbances where the safety of foreign nationals is at issue, such as the 2013 terrorist attack against the natural gas plant in Tigantourine,³⁷ or, later, the *hirāk* and the emergent controversy about foreign interference between the authorities and activists.³⁸ Yet it was security developments in the Maghreb-Sahel region that put the principle of non-interference/non-intervention within Algerian security doctrine to the test.

Dilemmas and Transformations in Algeria's Security Policy and Doctrine

Tension Between the Ethical-Normative and Security Imperative and Adapting to Security Doctrine

Due to the regional unrest triggered by the Libyan and Malian crises, since 2011 Algerian security doctrine has, for the first time in its history, confronted a true dilemma in terms of tension between the ethical-normative considerations and the security imperative. To free itself from (or at least mitigate) this conundrum, Algeria has adopted a flexible approach to conciliate the two imperatives, in line with the requirements of urgent situations; this becomes clear from its position on the Mali crisis, when its traditional rhetoric remained insistent on the rejection of foreign interference and military intervention and on the peaceful resolution of conflicts and crises. Its actions, however, took a somewhat different course: Algeria yielded to, then offered to support, French military intervention. This behaviour contradicts its security doctrine and its traditional non-interventionist discourse, and the reason was that the French interference serves its interests (i.e., driving terrorist movements away from its southern borders). The Mali crisis, thus, may be considered an example of the emergent tension between Algerian policy's ethical-normative and security imperatives.

It would later become clear that the contradiction between imperatives involves international issues as well, given the Algerian position on the war against Ukraine; Algeria abstained from voting on the UN General Assembly resolution to condemn the Russian invasion, in spite of its reverence for the principle of state sovereignty. Meanwhile, it used the territorial unity of states as well as this principle as a pretext

³⁴ Statement (in French) to the Third Channel, a francophone (public) radio: *Algeria 3*, 5/7/2018.

³⁵ "Consensus autour d'un rejet catégorique de l'ingérence dans les affaires internes de l'Algérie," *APS*, 26/11/2019, accessed on 15/3/2022, at: <https://cutt.ly/yFz3sBg>

³⁶ Helle Malmvig, *State Sovereignty and Intervention: A Discourse Analysis of Interventionary and Non-Interventionary Practices in Kosovo and Algeria* (London: Routledge, 2006).

³⁷ Louisa Dris Aït-Hamadouche, "L'Algérie et la sécurité au Sahel: lecture critique d'une approche paradoxale," *Confluences Méditerranée*, no. 90 (2014), p. 108.

³⁸ On this controversy, see: Farida Souiah, "Rhétorique de l'ingérence et lutte pour la légitimité," *Mouvement*, no. 102 (2020), pp. 35-42.

to take Serbia's side during the Western campaign in Kosovo. Because Russia is Algeria's primary and traditional arms supplier,³⁹ the latter had no choice but to let security prevail over principles. The Algerian authorities understand Western powers will not supply the country with advanced weaponry unless they break ties with Russia over the Ukraine crisis, as their attempts to diversify arms suppliers relying on Western states have been unsuccessful. Thus, they still rely on Russia, especially for advanced weaponry.

Non-Political Interference and/or Non-Military Intervention: Collapse of State, Collapse of Sovereignty

The principle of non-intervention⁴⁰ has become a mainstay of Algeria's behaviour. Yet, with cascading crises in the vicinity, it has become a subject of debate. The Algerian authorities have nevertheless remained committed, resisting external pressures to drive them toward intervention in the region without precluding a pragmatic adjustment of their security doctrine. Yet maintaining an absolute commitment across time and space to the principles of political non-interference and military non-intervention is no longer logical. It was meaningless to insist on the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states when the state had collapsed in Libya and nearly collapsed in Mali before France intervened.

Here lies the fault in Algeria's perspective: it insists on ruling out any interference or intervention in its neighbours' affairs, even when they face significant security disturbances that have blocked out the state and transformed their territories into a stronghold for local and transnational terrorist groups, who target Algerian land as well (e.g., the attack on the Tigantourine gas facility, which was planned in Mali and carried out by a group coming from Libya). In an absolute sense, therefore, the concepts of non-interference and non-intervention within a regional context of state delinquency—and, indeed, collapse, and of widespread non-state threats—now pose a danger to Algeria's national security.⁴¹ Because the function of the non-intervention principle in international relations lies in defending the principle of state sovereignty,⁴² one may argue in these conditions that sovereignty cannot be used as a pretext in the event of state collapse.

Algeria's strategic vision is flawed in its disregard of the fact that its national security may also be maintained from afar, and that, given the nature of these threats, it is no longer possible to restrict security to a conventional defensive doctrine. Algeria has not reviewed its security doctrine to take this transformation into account, but there seems to be some progress given what appeared in the magazine *El Djeich*:

*as well, our country's national security, which extends beyond our geographical borders, necessitates, in view of the prevailing situation in the region [...], that we strengthen and protect the security and stability of our country, and that we take part in peacekeeping operations.*⁴³

Irrespective of the Algerian authorities' justifications and the objectives of foreign powers (i.e., seeking to involve states of the region in security subcontracting), Algeria cannot hold fast to its position that stipulates political non-interference and military non-intervention, given the intensifying conflicts in its immediate vicinity.

The nature of these threats and crises at times necessitates an adaptation to reality to avoid the worst. From a realistic perspective, intervention in Mali, due to its unpredictable consequences, was preferable

³⁹ Mohamed Hemchi & Samia Rebiai, "Russian-Algerian Relations in Multipolarizing World," in: Tatiana Deych et al., *Africa's Growing Role in World Politics* (Moscow: Institute of African Studies-Russian Academy of Sciences, 2014), pp. 257-273.

⁴⁰ The principle does not necessarily rule out very limited operations, by special forces for example, or intelligence activities. But given the secretive nature of such operations, it is difficult to formulate a testable analysis of them.

⁴¹ Abdennour Benantar, "Sécurité aux frontières: Portée et limites de la stratégie algérienne," *L'Année du Maghreb*, no. 14 (2016), p. 148; Benantar, "The State and the Dilemma of Security Policy," pp. 103-104.

⁴² Vincent, p. 14.

⁴³ *El Djeich*, n°683 (June 2020), p. 1 [Arabic].

than risking the establishment of a terrorist emirate; this, as we shall see, explains the development in Algeria's position. However, there are dilemmas posed by the conflict between Algeria and regional and international actors about intervention that have nothing to do with a security doctrine. First, these actors demand Algeria intervene although to do so would increase instability, to such an extent that actors at times call for another intervention operation to correct the failures of a past operation, albeit with an admission that the intervention in Libya was a mistake.⁴⁴ Second, how is Algeria to intervene at a time when the progression of events affirms the cogency of its approach? Nevertheless, its position is difficult to maintain amid a state of security breakdown in which the state disappears to the advantage of non-state actors, particularly because the alternatives Algeria proposes have not achieved the desired goals.

The Mali Crisis: An Adaptation/Evolution in the Security Doctrine

It may at first sight appear that the way in which Algeria has dealt with crises in its regional neighbourhood has been entirely consistent with the founding principles of its foreign and security policy, or what are now known as “constants”, especially the principle of non-interference and non-intervention. This is, naturally, what the official narrative claims, although a careful look at Algeria's behaviour reveals that the security doctrine has undergone small, circumstantial adjustments, as was the case during the Mali crisis. We may observe three decisions that all run contrary to Algeria's official rhetoric and the founding principles of its doctrine: Algeria participated in regional meetings of West African states in preparation for the intervention in Mali; opened its airspace to the French Air Force, which may be regarded as a strategic discontinuity in its security doctrine; and supplied French forces with fuel during military operations in Mali.⁴⁵

The attack on Tigantourine contributed significantly to the evolution of Algeria's conduct and the advancement of relations with France, upsetting its border security defences and confounding its proclaimed non-intervention policy. This is what led to a “historic shift” in Algeria's position, strengthening the security of its borders with Mali and providing facilitations (e.g., open airspace, fuel, intelligence) to the French intervention therein.⁴⁶

This position on the intervention in Mali is an indication of an adaptation, albeit situational, for Algeria's doctrine according to the requirements of security interests. This would imply that its abstention from foreign intervention is not necessarily absolute and, hence, that it accepts the possibility of limited intervention if it aligns with Algerian security interests, or at least handles such intervention practically with a degree of positivity while maintaining the same narrative. All these transformations indicate that Algerian security doctrine has seen minor adjustments without any substantial review. It may be concluded that the principle of intervention is limited, or at least that the principle of logistical support for foreign intervention has not been ruled out.⁴⁷ In this way, Algeria's security interests obliged it to yield to and logistically support the French intervention, settling the matter in favour of the security imperative at the expense of the ethical-normative imperative. Our analysis of this case corresponds with Goldman's theoretical analysis, which holds that “incremental adaptations in national security doctrines should be expected as part of the normal course of events”. She highlights that

⁴⁴ See: Libya: Examination of Intervention and Collapse and the UK's Future Policy Options, House of Commons, Foreign Affairs Committee, Third Report of Session 2016-17, September 2016, accessed on 21/3/2022, at: <https://cutt.ly/TDBKIFp>; “Macron qualifie l'intervention militaire contre Kadhafi de ‘grave erreur’,” *Courrier international*, 2/2/2018, accessed on 21/3/2022, at: <https://cutt.ly/NDBHH5D>

⁴⁵ Benantar, “Sécurité aux frontières,” p. 160.

⁴⁶ Jean-François Daguzan, “La France, le Mali et la question diplomatique,” *Annuaire français de relations internationales*, vol. 15 (2014), p. 305.

⁴⁷ Benantar, *Les initiatives de sécurité au Maghreb et au Sahel*, pp. 139-140; Benantar, “Sécurité aux frontières,” p. 160.

change usually occurs slowly as the result of repeated interactions. Rarer are instances when states dramatically alter their national security doctrines, adopt a new national security identity, or reorder the salience of existing identities.

Therefore,

*dramatic shifts in national security doctrine are often the product of major discontinuities such as regime change, defeat in war, disappearance of a major threat, or revolutionary technological breakthroughs that alter the foundations of national power.*⁴⁸

Because these strategic discontinuities are unlikely, at least in the near future, it is unlikely in the Algerian case and in its strategic environment that a substantial transformation will occur in its overall security doctrine and policy, which is not to suggest the absence of tactical adaptation according to context and interests.

Constitutionalising the Army's Participation in Peacekeeping

Participation in Peacekeeping Operations: A Limited Shift in Security Doctrine

The Algerian constitution, amended in November 2020, permits the participation of the army in peacekeeping operations (art. 31, §3): “Within the framework of the United Nations, the African Union, and the Arab League, and in full compliance with their principles and goals, Algeria may participate in peacekeeping”. It also includes an article specifying the duties of the army:

the consolidation [...] of the Nation's defensive potential shall be regulated by the People's National Army. The People's National Army shall assume [its] permanent task of preserving national independence and defending national sovereignty. It shall also assume the task of protecting the unity of the country and the integrity of its land, as well as defending its land, airspace, and the various zones of its maritime domain. The Army shall take charge [...] of defending the country's vital and strategic interests, pursuant to the provisions of the constitution.

Even if the constitutional amendment constitutes a discontinuity in Algeria's perception of its security doctrine, it is a limited discontinuity in that it does not amount to a true strategic transformation. The amendment permits participation in peacekeeping operations, not military intervention, which remains highly improbable. Hence, it has not produced a strategic discontinuity in security doctrine and policy in general, nor does it indicate the collapse of the last bastion of non-intervention in the region. It is true that it permits the deployment of troops abroad, but it defines such a deployment in strict terms.

The objectives of this amendment are, thus, essentially political. The constitution stipulates parliamentary authorisation for this, which grants the authorities room to manoeuvre. The goal of the decision passing through parliament is not civil control of the armed forces, but a political tactic: if the authorities do not wish to deploy troops abroad, the parliament will vote at the behest of the authorities against intervention and thereby allow them to use this as an excuse with their international partners. But even if the parliament votes in favour of troop deployment abroad, it is non-binding for the president, whom the constitution (art. 91) grants the authority to decide “[whether] to send units of People's National Army abroad after Parliament's ratification by a two-third majority (2/3) of each chamber of Parliament”. This legal phrasing leaves no room for interpretation that the final decision lies in the hands of the President of the Republic.

⁴⁸ Goldman, p. 43.

Constitutionalising the Army's Participation in Peacekeeping Operations: Army Leadership's Justification

The constitution's authorisation of army participation in peacekeeping operations caused wide controversy in the country. As usual, the military leadership's response arrived via the magazine *El Djeich* in several instances. The response from the army's high command is highly important because it is directly involved in the matter, and because the justifications it has offered to substantiate this amendment are also significant given the army's political sway—furthermore these justifications express the army's perception of threats and diagnosis of the security situation abroad. We will mention two paragraphs from *El Djeich* that clearly demonstrate the army's perspective. In its June 2020 leading article, it printed that

the proposal for army participation [...] in peacekeeping operations [...] is entirely congruent with our country's foreign policy, which is based on constant and well-established principles that obviate recourse to war, call for peace, oppose interfering in the internal affairs of states, and aspire to resolve international conflicts by peaceful means, and it is consistent with the resolutions of international legalism [...]. Moreover, the national security of our country, which extends beyond our national geographical borders in view of the present situation in the region, demands that we strengthen and protect the security and stability of our nation country and take part in peacekeeping operations, [which] would generally contribute to the implementation of peace and security, especially on our Dark Continent that faces the greatest number of conflicts in the world and the deployment of the greatest number of United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions.⁴⁹

In its October 2020 issue, *El Djeich* published that

contrary to what some parties have promoted, the goal of this participation is not to intervene militarily [...] and enter into alliances or armed conflicts, because Algeria [...] has plead since its independence called for respect for the sovereignty of states and non-intervention in their internal affairs...⁵⁰

There are five conclusions to be drawn from these passages: (1) the army sees no contradiction between the participation of the armed forces in international peace missions and the firm principles of the country's security doctrine; (2) it recognizes the need for Algeria's participation in peace efforts including peacekeeping operations, especially in Africa, to carry out its assigned role; (3) the army further acknowledges the need to adapt the country's security doctrine to keep pace with the development of threats; (4) the army remains a participant in political debate despite saying that it does not play politics; and (5) it is clear from how *El Djeich* defends the decision that it came from the army's high command.

Motivations and Dangers

Why was this paragraph added to the constitution at that specific time? There were overlapping political objectives, foreign and domestic, at work behind this. Internally, two factors are of note. The first is the promotion of an upcoming democratic transition in the country, as requiring parliament's approval to send troops beyond the borders would seem to insinuate that there is a path toward gradually placing the armed forces under civilian, and especially legislative, oversight. The second factor is the attempt to gain legitimacy locally by affirming that the threats facing the country's security necessitate a constitutional

⁴⁹ *El Djeich*, n°683 (June 2020), p. 1 [Arabic].

⁵⁰ *El Djeich*, n°687 (October 2020), p. 29 [Arabic].

amendment.⁵¹ Hence, constitutionalising is also a mode of employing external affairs to serve internal aims: namely, attempting to limit the crisis of legitimacy in the *hirāk* context.

Externally, there are several factors to be observed. First, the authorities would consistently use the constitution to justify non-intervention; they are now using the amendment to allow the army to participate in peacekeeping. Second, it served as a response to the conventional desire from Algeria's African and international partners calling for it to intervene and thus contribute to peace operations. Third, this amendment also offered Algeria a way to gain recognition for its considerable efforts toward safeguarding regional peace—which still go unnoticed due to its absence from peacekeeping operations that many African states have been employing for political, military, and financial gain—as well as a platform to promote itself as a security provider.⁵²

Fourth, the amendment brought Algeria out of a structural dilemma: arguing for the continent's states to become answerable for their own security while simultaneously refusing to contribute to peacekeeping operations or any sort of intervention beyond its borders on the basis of constitutional rule. When African states agreed to establish the African Standby Force, Algeria announced it would not participate militarily and would provide only logistical support. On account of this structural tension between the principles of security ownership and non-intervention, Algeria left the task of maintaining regional security in the hands of foreign powers.⁵³ Fifth, perhaps the army's high command has met its need for this international opportunity through which the army became present in the international peacekeeping missions, providing African states with influence and yielding various returns.⁵⁴ Sixth, there was competition with Morocco, resurgent on the continental stage which is a contributor to these operations adopting peacekeeping diplomacy as a tool for political influence.

Regardless of what will happen in practice, as constitutionalising does not necessarily imply implementation in all places and at all times, the army's authorisation to participate in peacekeeping operations has been a tool to alleviate international pressure on Algeria to take part in military operations in the neighbourhood, as well as a means by which to obviate any potential reversal on the principle of military non-intervention. With this decision, Algeria has relieved itself of foreign pressures on one hand and consecrated the principle of military non-intervention and international legalism on the other. In any case, whatever the motivations, justifications, and objectives, Algeria could no longer continue to call for African states to take responsibility for their security and simultaneously refuse to contribute to peacekeeping on the continent, much less with its influence at stake.

There are dangers that might follow its participation in peacekeeping operations, especially the possibility of being implicated in unnecessary conflicts, such as being entangled in wars on behalf of foreign powers, that would drain its military and financial capacities. This could put Algeria before a new dilemma: the resultant tension between the security imperative (i.e., not embroiling itself in unnecessary conflicts) and the political imperative (i.e., participating in peacekeeping), especially because it calls for local answerability to the region's conflicts independently of intervention by foreign actors.

The constitutional amendment responds to one aspect of the dilemma while overlooking the other. It redresses the flaw in its foreign and security policy of, on one hand, urging African states to take responsibility for their regional and continental security while rejecting foreign intervention and, on the

⁵¹ "al-Mawqif al-Jazā' irī min al-Azma al-Lībiyya: Bayn al-Taghayyur wa-l-Istimrāriyya," *Situation Assessment*, ACRPS, 7/7/2020, p. 6, accessed on 10/3/2022, at: <https://cutt.ly/UFs55i6>

⁵² Nicolas Desgrais & Sonia Le Gouriellec, "Stratégies d'extraversion: défis de la construction de l'Architecture africaine de paix et de sécurité," *Note de recherche stratégique* (IRSEM), no. 28 (Juillet 2016).

⁵³ Benantar, "The State and the Dilemma of Security Policy," p. 104.

⁵⁴ On the political use of peacekeeping operations by African countries, see: Desgrais & Le Gouriellec, pp. 2, 5-6.

other, refraining from taking part in peacekeeping efforts. Conversely, the amendment preserved the issue of using non-interference in the internal affairs of states as a pretext in the event of state collapse in the region. Algeria's response, thus, remains incomplete and raises a new contradiction: it underscores the official narrative that the amendment is in accordance with security developments in the region. But how might participation in peacekeeping operations mitigate, for instance, the surge of security threats along the country's borders? There are no peacekeeping operations in Libya, and the UN mission in Mali carries no practical weight. If some of the authorities' justifications for amending the constitution correspond with reality, the rest do not.

Foreign Involvement to Reinforce Domestic Authoritarianism?

There are those who argue that international commitment to Algeria is guided by political considerations around preserving the ruling regime and, thus, has become "a resource for strengthening the regime's internal resilience".⁵⁵ This applies to the war on terror employed by states as they take advantage of terrorism's constructed and instrumental nature. Borrowing from Alexander Wendt's famous statement on anarchy,⁵⁶ we argue that counterterrorism is what states make of it. The great powers use it to legitimise their influence and to update their domination; given the performative nature of discourse on terrorism, its mere mention suffices to elicit panic for any state, lest it face the accusation of supporting terrorism. Internally, states have utilised the war on terror to legitimise security strategies, violations of fundamental rights, and restraining political opposition.

In line with other states, including the great powers, Algeria employs counterterrorism for internal⁵⁷ and external political objectives. Hence, it uses it as a political resource, but with a notable difference that sets it apart from other states. Were Algeria to employ it as do other states, it would have intervened militarily as has been asked of it numerous times, and this would have been a strong means by which to strengthen authoritarianism domestically. Yet given its rejection of interference and intervention in the affairs and territories of others and its refusal to condone the intervention of other states, Algeria neither utilises interference/intervention as a lever of influence abroad, nor to bolster the resilience of the ruling regime at home.

The approach that the Algerian regime has embraced is quite apart from that of other African regimes, who adopt what Jean-François Bayart call extraversion strategy that generates multifaceted (e.g., political, military, and economic) returns in exchange for their involvement internationally that allow them to strengthen their authoritarianism with support, implicit or explicit, from major actors.⁵⁸ But why has the Algerian regime not appropriated this strategy to profit in service of its resilience? This may be clarified with four factors. First, the conception of the outside as generally constituting a threat within the political imaginary passed down from the colonial period and the revolution for liberation,⁵⁹ and a determinant factor for the perceptions and representations that concern relations with others (i.e., abroad). Second, the independence- and sovereignty-based approach has consecrated the country's independent strategic decision and non-interference/intervention. Third, the Algerian regime enjoys political resources sufficient to allow it to define (or strengthen) its authoritarianism: revolutionary legitimacy (despite its erosion), security legitimacy (inherited from the 1990s), a network of intermediaries (e.g., regime parties, loyalist

⁵⁵ Dris-Aït Hamadouche, "Politique extérieure et politique intérieure algérienne," p. 18.

⁵⁶ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization*, vol. 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992), pp. 391-425.

⁵⁷ The country's February 2022 adoption of the National List of Terrorist Individuals and Entities may be included within this strategy. See the decision involving inclusion in the list at: *JORADP*, 27/2/2022.

⁵⁸ Jean-François Bayart, "L'Afrique dans le monde: une histoire d'extraversion," *Critique internationale*, no. 5 (1999), pp. 98-99.

⁵⁹ Dris-Aït Hamadouche, "Politique extérieure et politique intérieure algérienne," pp. 12-14.

parties, and related institutions), a strong client-based system, and oil rents that allow social remittances to buy social peace.⁶⁰ Fourth, the regime is strong enough to neutralise foreign pressures. For all these reasons combined, it does not want for foreign legitimacy to cover a deficit in its legitimacy, despite of its erosion especially in the context of the *hirāk*.

Yet developments within this *hirāk* context indicate that some of these explanatory elements are no longer valid and that a transition of some sort has occurred or is currently occurring, without implying that the above analysis is entirely unsuitable for approaching Algeria's position on international commitment. The first development is the regime's seeking refuge abroad at the height of the *hirāk*. Despite its conventional narrative on rejecting interference in a country's internal affairs, the regime twice resorted (March and October 2019) to seeking international support for its roadmap, rejected by the *hirāk*; this may be considered a discontinuity in the behaviour of the Algerian regime, which built its legitimacy on a domestic foundation. The second indication comes through the constitution's authorising the army to participate in peacekeeping operations.

Will Algeria follow the lead of the African states and others that reap strategic returns from these operations? I argue that this is unlikely. First, the constitutional amendment decision suggests a strategy which is defensive more than offensive, as it was taken to put an end to the contradictions in Algeria's stance (i.e., that Africans must be answerable for their security on one hand while itself abstaining from peacekeeping operations on the other), in addition to responding to Morocco's growing influence following its return to the African Union. Second, the Algerian regime has not been in so fragile a state as to gamble on foreign legitimacy as a replacement for (or at least to support) local legitimacy. Third, it has not been in the interest of active global powers to upset Algeria's stability (for fear of mounting crises in an already-turbulent region). Hence, the Algerian regime necessarily has no interest in serving foreign wishes or bowing to dictates.

Algeria's Security Strategy in the Region

A Cooperative Approach with Integrated Dimensions as an Alternative to Intervention

Buzan argues that the distinction between threats and vulnerabilities allows one to illustrate both sides of national security policy by determining state options and behaviours that

*can seek to reduce their insecurity either by reducing their vulnerability or by preventing or lessening threats [...] In other words, national security policy can either focus inward, seeking to reduce the vulnerabilities of the state itself, or outward, seeking to reduce external threat but addressing its sources.*⁶¹

Hence, any good security policy must deal with threats in two ways: resisting them by minimising vulnerabilities and preparing defences (e.g., to confront an invasion), and addressing their causes (e.g., by seeking the peaceful resolution of conflicts).⁶² Were we to apply this analysis to Algeria's security policy, we would find that it works toward both choices at once; instead of an intervention-based approach, Algeria has preferred to strengthen the defensive dimension of its army and to mediate between conflicting parties, also relying on cooperative tracks with neighbouring states.

⁶⁰ On the scale of government subsidies, see: Marouane Benkidda & Djillali Bouzekri, "Iṣlāḥ al-Da'm al-Ḥukūmī fī-l-Jazā'ir bayn Muqtaḍayāt al-Fa'āliyya al-'Iqtisādiyya wa-Mutaṭallabāt al-Waḍ' al-Ijtīmā'ī," *Economies of North Africa*, vol. 17, no. 26 (2021), pp. 17-34.

⁶¹ Buzan, *People, States and Fear* (1991), p. 112.

⁶² Buzan, *People, States and Fear* (1983), p. 90.

Algeria's security strategy to confront crises in its environment and broadly to maintain regional security relies on approaching security by way of cooperation instead of foreign intervention. It is an integrated strategy based on five tenets.

- The first tenet is operational and consists of the security and military measures Algeria has taken to monitor and protect its borders. It is national but has regional implications: by defending its borders, Algeria protects those of its neighbours.
- The second tenet is bilateral and manifests in cooperative political, security, and military tracks with neighbouring states, in particular Tunisia, Libya, and Niger; Algeria supports them in realms ranging from the political and financial (e.g., grants and loans), to the realms of security (e.g., guarding the borders, joint patrols, sharing intelligence, training security forces) and military (e.g., aid, armaments, training).
- The third tenet, the oldest within this strategy, is mediation to resolve conflicts.
- The fourth tenet is a form of multilateral mediation through cooperative regional pathways: the tripartite route of Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt; the route of states bordering Libya; and the "pays du champ" initiative (of Algeria, Niger, Mali, and Mauritania).
- The fifth tenet relates to the manner with which to deal with local components in Libya and Mali through adopting a twofold strategy of inclusive dialogue and the distinction between the political component, which must be involved in the negotiation process, and the terrorist component, which must be fought.⁶³

These tenets correspond with the options on which the founding principles of Algerian foreign and security policy and doctrine are based. They all contribute to a common strategic goal that states in the area take responsibility for regional security as an alternative to foreign intervention, yet their accomplishments remain limited. If the first two tenets have found success and prevented further deterioration in the security situation, the three others have yet to bear fruit. The third and fourth tenet (mediation) have not achieved their goals: after three decades of mediation in Mali's crises, Algeria has so far been unsuccessful in establishing peace in the country. Yet it is impossible to hold Algeria responsible for every failure, and the same may be said of its mediation in the Libyan crisis.

However, in the case of the Algerian-Tunisian-Egyptian tripartite approach to the Libyan crisis, the process was foiled from within due to Egyptian support for Khalifa Haftar's forces against the internationally-recognised government. Meanwhile, the fifth tenet, based on inclusion and the political-terrorism distinction, succeeded in its first part, and failed in its second: it was unable to isolate the Azawadi political component from the terrorist component, with its endogenous (Azawadi) and exogenous (terrorist) elements, due to terrorist groups having infiltrated the Azawad region.⁶⁴

Algeria has offered aid to the region's states in attending to regional security by themselves as an alternative to foreign intervention. Yet this objective has been ill-fated due to state failure—as failed states locally cannot succeed regionally—and the conflict of interests and strategic preferences among the states involved.⁶⁵ Moreover, to focus on the foreign element and hold the Other (i.e., strangers to the region) responsible for the consequences of everything is to exaggerate the role of foreign powers while trivialising the endogenous causes of state ineffectuality in the region. In such a situation, we cannot but return to Mohammed Ayoob's analysis on the subject of security for states of the Global South, who argues that

⁶³ Benantar, *Initiatives de sécurité au Maghreb et au Sahel*, pp. 59-78, 111-121.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 50, 144.

external threats, despite their importance, are insufficient to explain the security landscape, focusing on the significance of these states' internal sources of security: these are problems largely of a non-military nature.⁶⁶

Security of Neighbouring States as a Strategic Bet: Regionalising Algerian National Security

William Zartman argues that

*the foreign policy of a state aims, in principle, to ensure both the security of that state, and the stability of other states important for its maintenance. This dual concern of security and stability, both economic and political, implies an interest in reducing conflicts with and within other states [...] Security can therefore no longer be reduced to national defence. On the contrary, it implies the resolution of external conflicts before they become destabilizing factors or military risk.*⁶⁷

State security, hence, takes on a regional character through regionalisation, although not all states have adopted this conception in their behaviour. One may distinguish between three choices by which states maintain their security against external threats before the latter can impact their interests or harm their territories. The first concerns the use of force, the second favouring conflict prevention and peaceful resolution, and the third the use of soft and hard power instruments, though few states are capable of combining both at once. Algeria has embraced the second choice. It is true that it currently possesses considerable military capabilities permitting it to intervene beyond its borders, yet it committed to the founding principles of its doctrine. Nevertheless, in recent years the country has begun to grasp the fact that its national security may also be maintained miles away from its geographical borders, and that there is no way to separate it from regional security. Hence, after remaining captive to a state-centric logic, its doctrine has come to account for threats resulting from the growing activity of infra- and supra-state actors. From this perspective, it may be said to have begun to transcend conventional defence policy.

Algeria has presented itself as a security and stability provider, a role which regional and international actors have recognised. Yet there is an impression that it has not sufficiently undertaken its regional responsibilities, which is unfair: Algeria is the greatest defender of regional security out of the region's states, for which it expends military efforts despite not being involved in any wars, and to which it dedicates significant military assets based on its endogenous capabilities.⁶⁸ According to Algerian sources, the Mali crisis has cost Algeria more than \$2 billion in border protection from 2013 to 2020, apart from indirect costs (e.g., counterterrorism operations, economic consequences of closed borders, etc.).⁶⁹

Regardless of the kind of relationships Algeria has with countries and their ruling regimes, the security of the region's states may be considered a top priority for Algeria's security interests. For instance, Algeria has not adopted policies to upset Morocco's stability despite their conflicts. Its policy toward Tunisia and Egypt in the context of the events of the so-called Arab Spring emphasises its positioning, as dictated by its interests: security first, regardless of the nature of regimes—the priority is to avoid state collapse. Based on this Algerian perception, stability may be minimally understood as the absence of significant upheavals that could involve undermining the foundations of the state, depriving it of control over its lands and borders, and perhaps its total collapse, along with the resultant security consequences in the

⁶⁶ Mohammed Ayoob, "The Security Problematic of the Third World," *World Politics*, vol. 43, no. 2 (January 1991), pp. 257-263.

⁶⁷ William I. Zartman, "La politique étrangère et le règlement des conflits," in: Frédéric Charillon (dir.), *Politique étrangère: nouveaux regards* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2002), p. 275.

⁶⁸ Benantar, *Initiatives de sécurité au Maghreb et au Sahel*, p. 145.

⁶⁹ *El Khabar*, 15/12/2022 [Arabic].

neighbourhood. [It is from this perspective that Algeria, in line with European states and the United States, relies on authoritarian stability.

Because the state crisis is a concern for Algeria,⁷⁰ it has focused on restoring state authority to the region's countries. It has supported Tunisia at all levels, as the Algerian regime's authoritarianism has not precluded it from backing Tunisia's transition. Of course, it did so not out of love for democracy but of an aversion to instability: what matters is that Tunisia, be it authoritarian or transitional, remain stable. The Algerian regime's stance on the matter indicates a confidence and lack of apprehension toward a "democratic contamination" when the transition process in Tunisia is finished. This confidence is perhaps explained by the regime's having overcome the "Arab Spring" of 2011⁷¹ and having adopted the presidency-for-life model, until the *hirāk* emerged to undermine it in 2019.⁷² It adopted nearly the same method regarding the Egyptian crisis: Algeria did not condemn the military coup against elected president Mohamed Morsi, yet ideological considerations cannot explain its position because it refused, for instance, to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist movement despite pressure from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE. It is clear that apprehension around the stability of the Egyptian state being impaired is what explains this position. From the perspective of the Algerian authorities, the already-tumultuous region is hardly in need of a new focus of tension that could impact the largest state in the Arab world. Hence, the imperative of Egypt's stability, regardless of the nature of the ruling regime, has been decisive.

To Algeria, the Egyptian case presented a quandary: whether to maintain the normative tenet it helped bring about in Africa (i.e., the principle of rejecting the unconstitutional change adopted by the 1999 African Union summit in Algeria) or to act according to the requirements of realism. Not only did the Algerian authorities not condemn the military coup in Egypt, but they in fact also supported the resulting authoritarian regime, playing an essential role in ending the sanctions the African Union imposed on Egypt because of the coup. Here, it is notable that a kind of acclimation I observed in the Mali crisis began to characterise Algerian policy, leading to the erosion of the normative imperative to the advantage of the security imperative. As such, the same security interests govern the Algerian position on Libya, Mali, and Tunisia: the presence of a stable, "strong" state capable of monitoring its lands and borders.

Algeria has displayed "an interest in strong, centralised states along its borders" to avoid the emergence of forces for partition and a plurality of actors, with whom it would later have to deal. This security preoccupation essentially derives from the presence of territory along its borders which are beyond the authority of governments, or not sufficiently under their control. Algeria, like many other states, prefers a regulated, local interlocutor with authority and shows discomfort toward non-state actors.⁷³ Herein lies the new dimension imposed upon its security doctrine: in its Maghrebi-Saheli environment,⁷⁴ Algeria faces non-state threats that are of a complex nature—asymmetrical, multi-ethnic, itinerant, and volatile. They pose a challenge for armies designed to engage in inter-state conflicts, all within the context of the state crisis in the region, given that the escalating threats are the product of state failure.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ "Algeria and its Neighbours," International Crisis Group, *Middle East and North Africa Report*, no. 164, 12 October 2015, pp. 13-14, accessed on 15/3/2022, at: <https://cutt.ly/FFoiikS>

⁷¹ On Algeria and the "Arab Spring," see: Frédéric Volpi, "Algeria Versus the Arab Spring," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 24, no. 3 (July 2013), pp. 104-115.

⁷² On the *hirāk*, see: Mouslem Babaarabi, "The Constitutional Management of Political Transition in Algeria: Do the Existing Constitutional Paths Meet the Demands of the Hirak?" *Siyasat Arabiya*, no. 52 (September 2021), pp. 63-81.

⁷³ "Algeria and its Neighbours," p. 13.

⁷⁴ For details on Algerian policy regarding crises and threats in the Sahel, see: Benantar, *Les initiatives de sécurité au Maghreb et au Sahel*, Salim Chena, "Le Sahara et le Sahel dans la politique algérienne: territoires menacés, espaces menaçants," *Recherches internationales*, no. 97 (Octobre-Décembre 2013), pp. 129-146; Dris Aït-Hamadouche, "L'Algérie et la sécurité au Sahel," pp. 105-121.

⁷⁵ Abdennour Benantar, "al-Jazā'ir fi Muwājahat al-Taḥdīdāt al-Lādawlatiyya," *al-Siyassa al-Dawliya*, vol. 53, no. 210 (October 2017), p. 98.

Another decisive factor at the heart of Algeria's security policy is the territorial integrity and sovereignty of states. For Algeria, the territorial integrity of Libya and Mali is a red line. Thus, this triad (i.e., stability, a "strong" state, and territorial integrity), indispensable for neighbouring countries to be able to establish their authority throughout their lands, is the essential model for its regional policy in an environment which, owing to the spread of infra- and supra-state actors, is experiencing a rift in states' monopoly on the legitimate use of violence, to quote Max Weber. According to Weber,

*the relation between the State and violence is an especially intimate one [...in that] a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory[.] The state is considered the sole source of the "right" to use violence [.]*⁷⁶

and even the production of identity is dependent on it. Wendt argues that "to reproduce the identity of the state, a group needs to sustain a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence in their territory".⁷⁷ The issue of returning this quality to the state alone has become an Algerian security concern in a regional context where the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence has been taken away from the state, whether entirely (e.g., Libya) or partially (e.g., Mali). Algeria therefore works toward the restitution and preservation of this privilege to address instability, strengthen security cooperation, and especially to reduce the border defence burden it carries.

Conclusion

For Algeria's security policy and doctrine, non-interference remains constant and foundational, and it has in fact grown more intense with the *hirāk* over the past two years. Yet the most important conclusion is that Algeria no longer takes such a strict position on military intervention, as the Mali crisis has proven. If its forbearance from doing so has eroded to an extent, the categorical opposition to deploying troops beyond its borders became a thing of the past after renouncing legal pretext by constitutionalising the army's participation in peacekeeping operations. Yet this does not mean that the government will necessarily risk doing so. If the Mali crisis has demonstrated the shortcomings of Algeria's strategic vision, the Libyan crisis and its developments have proven its perceptions and concerns right. In such conditions, therefore, the Algerian government cannot become a godfather of intervention, regardless of principles, on the one hand. On the other, in line with the transformation (i.e., the adaptation, not total overhaul) of its security doctrine, Algeria continues to operate based on its non-coercive regional security strategy, on which it depends to avoid foreign intervention. The tension between ethical-normative and security considerations is likely to intensify should the unrest in its neighbourhood continue, especially because constitutionalising its army's participation in peace operations, thereby imbuing its role as a security and stability provider with an official, institutional character, solves only part of the problem. Thus, Algeria remains to some extent trapped between anvil of the regional and international environment and the hammer of its security interests and doctrine.

⁷⁶ Max Weber, *Politics as Vocation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 3–4.

⁷⁷ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 130.

References

- “AAP-06 Edition 2021 – NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions.” *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. 2021. Accessed on 18/3/2022, at: <https://cutt.ly/KD9tpoK>
- “Algeria and its Neighbours.” International Crisis Group. *Middle East and North Africa Report*. no. 164. 12 October 2015. Accessed on 15/3/2022, at: <https://cutt.ly/FFoiikS>
- “al-Mawqif al-Jazā’irī min al-Azma al-Lībiyya: Bayn al-Taghayyur wa-l-Istīmārīyya.” *Situation Assessment*. ACRPS. 7/7/2020. Accessed on 10/3/2022, at: <https://cutt.ly/UFs55i6>
- “Consensus autour d’un rejet catégorique de l’ingérence dans les affaires internes de l’Algérie.” *APS*. 26/11/2019. Accessed on 15/3/2022, at: <https://cutt.ly/yFz3sBg>
- “National Security Policies - Formulating National Security Policies for Good Security Sector Governance.” *DCAF*. Accessed on 30/7/2022, at: <https://cutt.ly/lCAnzJe>
- Abdulhay, Walid. “al-‘Ilāqāt al-Maghribiyya – al-Jazā’iriyya: al-‘Uqda al-Jiyūstrātījiyya.” *Siyasat Arabiya*. no. 6 (January 2014).
- Ayoob, Mohammed. “The Security Problematic of the Third World.” *World Politics*. vol. 43. no. 2 (January 1991).
- Babaarabi, Mouslem. “The Constitutional Management of Political Transition in Algeria: Do the Existing Constitutional Paths Meet the Demands of the Hirak?” *Siyasat Arabiya*. no. 52 (September 2021).
- Balzacq, Thierry. *Théories de la sécurité: Les approches critiques*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2016.
- Bayart, Jean-François. “L’Afrique dans le monde: une histoire d’extraversion.” *Critique internationale*. no. 5 (1999).
- Benantar, Abdennour. “‘Aqīdat al-Jazā’ir al-Amniyya: Ḍughūtāt al-Bī’a wa-Muqtaḍayāt al-Maṣāliḥ.” *Aljazeera Centre for Studies*. 2/5/2018. Accessed on 16/3/2020, at: <https://cutt.ly/4D7kTtK>
- _____. “Sécurité aux frontières: Portée et limites de la stratégie algérienne.” *L’Année du Maghreb*. no. 14 (2016).
- _____. *al-Bu’d al-Mutawassiṭ lil-Amn al-Jazā’irī: al-Jazā’ir, ‘Urūbba, wa-l-Ḥilf al-Aṭlasī*. Algiers: Contemporary Library, 2005.
- _____. *Les initiatives de sécurité au Maghreb et au Sahel: le G5 Sahel mis à l’épreuve*. Paris: Fondation pour la recherche stratégique L’Harmattan, 2019.
- _____. “al-Jazā’ir fī Muwājahat al-Taḥdīdāt al-Lādawlatiyya.” *al-Siyassa al-Dawliya*. vol. 53. no. 210 (October 2017).
- Benkidda, Marouane & Djillali Bouzekri. “Iṣlāḥ al-Da‘m al-Ḥukūmī fī-l-Jazā’ir bayn Muqtaḍayāt al-Fa‘āliyya al-‘Iqtisādiyya wa-Mutaṭallabāt al-Waḍ‘ al-Ijtimā‘ī.” *Economies of North Africa*. vol. 17. no. 26 (2021).
- Boumédiène, Houari. *Discours: du sang à la sueur*. Alger: Ministère de l’information et de la Culture, 1975.
- Buzan, Barry. *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd ed. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991.
- _____. *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983.

- Charillon, Frédéric (dir.). *Politique étrangère: nouveaux regards*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2002.
- Chena, Salim. "Le Sahara et le Sahel dans la politique algérienne: territoires menacés, espaces menaçants." *Recherches internationales*. no. 97 (Octobre-Décembre 2013).
- Cottrell, Alvin J. & James D. Theberge (eds.). *The Western Mediterranean: Its Political, Economic and Strategic Importance*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974.
- Daguzan, Jean-François. "La France, le Mali et la question diplomatique." *Annuaire français de relations internationales*. vol. 15 (2014).
- Desgrais, Nicolas & Sonia Le Gouriellec. "Stratégies d'extraversion: défis de la construction de l'Architecture africaine de paix et de sécurité." *Note de recherche stratégique (IRSEM)*. no. 28 (Juillet 2016).
- Deych, Tatiana et al. *Africa's Growing Role in World Politics*. Moscow: Institute of African Studies-Russian Academy of Sciences, 2014.
- Dieng, Moda. "Maintien de la paix: apports et limites de l'action diplomatique sud-africaine." *Revue Etudes internationales*. vol. 45. no. 2 (Juin 2004).
- Goldman, Emily O. "New Threats, New Identities and New Ways of War: The Sources of Change in National Security Doctrine." *Journal of Strategic Studies*. vol. 24. no. 2 (2001).
- Hagerty, Devin T. "India's Regional Security Doctrine." *Asian Survey*. vol. 31. no. 4 (April 1991).
- Hamadouche, Louisa Dris Aït. "L'Algérie et la sécurité au Sahel: lecture critique d'une approche paradoxale." *Confluences Méditerranée*. no. 90 (2014).
- _____. "Politique extérieure et politique intérieure algérienne: la résistance révolutionnaire au service de la résilience autoritaire?" *Maghreb-Machrek*. no. 221 (2014).
- Hermassi, Abdelbaki. *al-Mujtama' wa-l-Dawla fi al-Maghrib al-'Arabī*. Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 1987.
- Ismail, Esraa Ahmed. *al-'Ilāqāt al-Madaniyya al-'Askariyya wa-'Amaliyyat al-Taḥawwul al-Dīmuqrāṭī: Dirāsa Muqārīna bayn Miṣr wa-l-Jazā'ir*. Cairo: al-Maktab al-Arabi Lil-Maarif, 2017.
- Jordaan, Evert & Abdel Esterhuysen. "South African Defence since 1994: The Influence of Non-offensive Defence." *African Security Review*. vol. 13. no. 1 (2004).
- Lakhdari, Mansour. *al-Siyāsa al-Amniyya al-Jazā'iriyya: al-Muḥaddidāt, al-Mayādīn, al-Taḥaddiyāt*. Doha: ACRPS, 2015.
- Libya: Examination of Intervention and Collapse and the UK's Future Policy Options, House of Commons. Foreign Affairs Committee, Third Report of Session 2016-17. September 2016. Accessed on 21/3/2022, at: <https://cutt.ly/TDBKIFp>
- Malmvig, Helle. *State Sovereignty and Intervention: A Discourse Analysis of Interventionary and Non-Interventionary Practices in Kosovo and Algeria*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Martinez, Luis & Rasmus Alenius Boserup (eds.). *Algeria Modern: From Opacity to Complexity*. London: Hurst, 2016.
- Martinez, Luis. *L'Afrique du Nord après les révoltes arabes*. Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2019.
- Raleigh, Clionadh, Héni Nsaibia & Caitriona Dowd. "The Sahel Crisis Since 2012." *African Affairs*. vol. 120. no. 478 (January 2021).

Souiah, Farida. "Rhétorique de l'ingérence et lutte pour la légitimité." *Mouvement*. no. 102 (2020).

Vincent, R. J. *Nonintervention and International Order*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.

Volpi, Frédéric. "Algeria Versus the Arab Spring." *Journal of Democracy*. vol. 24. no. 3 (July 2013).

Weber, Cynthia. *Simulating Sovereignty: Intervention, the State and Symbolic Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Weber, Max. *Politics as Vocation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Weldes, Jutta. *Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

Wendt, Alexander. "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization*. vol. 46. no. 2 (Spring 1992).

_____. *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.